

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13 JUSE-00
NSAE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05 TRSE-00 ICA-11 NSC-05
OES-07 OMB-01 /065 W
-----124507 261528Z /45

R 260853Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5445
INFO DEA HQS WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1924

BANGKOK FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: SNAR, BM
SUBJ: NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN TENASSERIM AREA

REF: RANGOON 1303

1. DURING AMEETING MAY 25 WITH BRO RD ADDARIO, DEPUTY RD BECKNER, AND EMBASSY OFFICERS, PEOPLE'S POLICE FORCE DIRECTOR GENERAL U SHWE THAN SAID THAT FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION OF THE SEIZURE OF 109 KG OF OPIUM ON A SCHOONER ABOUT TO SAIL FROM RANGOON TO MERGUI (REFTEL) INDICATED THAT THE OPIUM WAS DESTINED FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION IN THE TENASSERIM AREA, NOT FOR PROCESSING OR EXPORT INTO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS. THERE IS A STRONG DEMAND FOR OPIUM IN THE TENASSERIM, HE SAID, BECAUSE MANY OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF FISHERMEN THERE ARE OPIUM EATERS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE VERY ACTIVE INTERNATIONAL SMUGGLING TRADE ALONG THE TENASSERIM COAST OFFERS POTENTIALLY FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR THE OPENING OF A MAJOR NEW INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING ROUTE WHICH WOULD BYPASS NORTHERN THAILAND. HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE GUB IS AWARE OF THIS THREAT AND HAS INVESTIGATED THE SITUATION, BUT THUS FAR HAS FOUND NO EVIDENCE THAT SUCH A NEW ROUTE
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HAS IN FACT OPENED TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE.

2. COMMENT: OUR OWN INTELLIGENCE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM THE MOVEMENT OF LARGE AMOUNTS OF NARCOTICS VIA THE SEA ROUTE TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS. WE DO KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT SOME SHIPMENTS OF OPIUM AND HEROIN HAVE BEEN SMUGGLED OUT TO THAILAND AND MALAYSIA BY BOATS CARRYING CARGOES OF MIXED

CONTRABAND. INCREASINGLY, INDEPENDENT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS IN NORTHERN BURMA HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO BE EXPLORING, AND IN SOME CASES EXPERIMENTING WITH, THE SEA ROUTE IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE TRADITIONAL OVERLAND ROUTES INTO NORTHERN THAILAND. WE BELIEVE THE SEA ROUTE FROM THE TENASSERIM COAST CONSTITUTES A POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT TRAFFICKING LINK AND BEARS CLOSE WATCHING.
BEAN

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 26 may 1978
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